

Challenges of Identifying Fishing Communities in the Southeast

Palma Ingles, Ph.D.
Cultural Anthropologist
Southeast Regional Office



Identifying Fishing Communities

- Overview of what we have accomplished so far in the Southeast towards the identification of fishing communities
- Discuss some of the challenges/problems encountered so far
- Conclusions

Challenges of Research

- Funding
- Time
- Priorities
- Researchers
- Designing Instruments
- OMB



Southeast Region



Research and Hurricanes



Charley

Frances



Research and Hurricanes



Florida...

~~The
Sunshine~~
PLYWOOD State

Southeast Region

- Consisting of three councils
- Gulf of Mexico
- South Atlantic
- Caribbean



Gulf of Mexico

- Research on identifying potential fishing communities funded by NS-8
- A list of potential fishing communities generated from secondary data such as license data and landings data
- Louisiana and Florida started in 2002
- Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama started in 2003

Gulf of Mexico

- Impact Assessment, Inc. hired to do research in Gulf states
- Analysis of secondary data
- Visit to each community on NMFS' list
- GIS maps showing homes of fishermen, fish houses, marinas, etc.
- Tables of landings, fishing infrastructure, demographics
- Brief community descriptions

South Atlantic

- Money from the Southeast Regional Office contracted out to do the preliminary research for identifying fishing communities
- After over three years, we have still not received any information on the research that has been done
- Researchers encountered problems with work done by graduate students which made it difficult for the contractor to complete report

South Atlantic

- Due to lack of reports, NMFS can not proceed with second stage of doing in-depth community profiles
- When listing priorities for research, we have chosen to concentrate on the Gulf of Mexico until we know what we have in the South Atlantic



Phase 2: Gulf of Mexico

- Based on the draft report of research done in Louisiana, I chose two communities to do in-depth profiles of in summer of 2004
- This year was a test to see how much time and resources would be needed to do in-depth profiles
- One community that seemed to stand (somewhat) alone: Grand Isle
- One grouping of communities that appear to be connected based on proximity and fisheries: Venice/Buras/Empire

Designing Research

- Chose locations that participate in fisheries that we need information on for current and upcoming plans
- Was concerned about timing for OMB approval, so no survey instrument
- With limited time and funds for field research, no time to train people
- Hired seasoned researchers

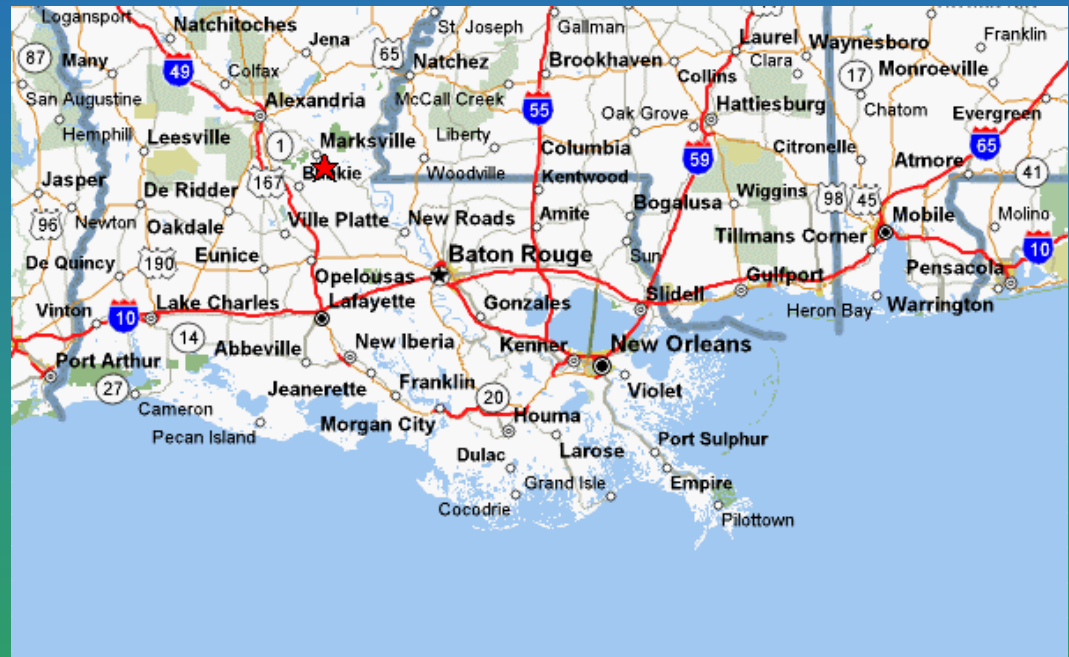


Designing Research

- Trained the two researchers for one and a half days
- Basic information on what the goals were for the research, how research was to be used, mandates, councils, fisheries, FMPs, SIAs, etc.
- Gave a crash course on NMFS 101

Grand Isle

- A small island three hours southwest of New Orleans
- About 1,400 people
- The only beach in Louisiana



Grand Isle

- Economy built on commercial and recreational fishing and the oil industry
- Shrimping main commercial fishery



Grand Isle

- Worked with two fish houses that unload shrimp and various fish
- Interviewed mostly shrimpers
- Many of the shrimpers live in Grand Isle
- Do unload other boats



Shrimping in Grand Isle

- Many small skimmer boats which shrimp in state waters
- Boats with only one or two people
- Some shrimp in federal and state waters



Interviewing Shrimpers

- Small boats shrimp all night until early morning, unloading throughout the day
- Fishermen tired after being out all night
- Beginning of good shrimp season, so they wanted to be out shrimping
- A lot of time waiting to find people to interview

Interviewing Shrimpers

- A total of three researchers in Grand Isle for six days
- Also interviewed owners of marinas, people who worked with tourism, realtors, old-timers



Research Results

- Over 25 interviews
- Did not get enough information for complete community profile
- Still need more interviews with people in oil industry, tourism, recreational fishermen, and other community members

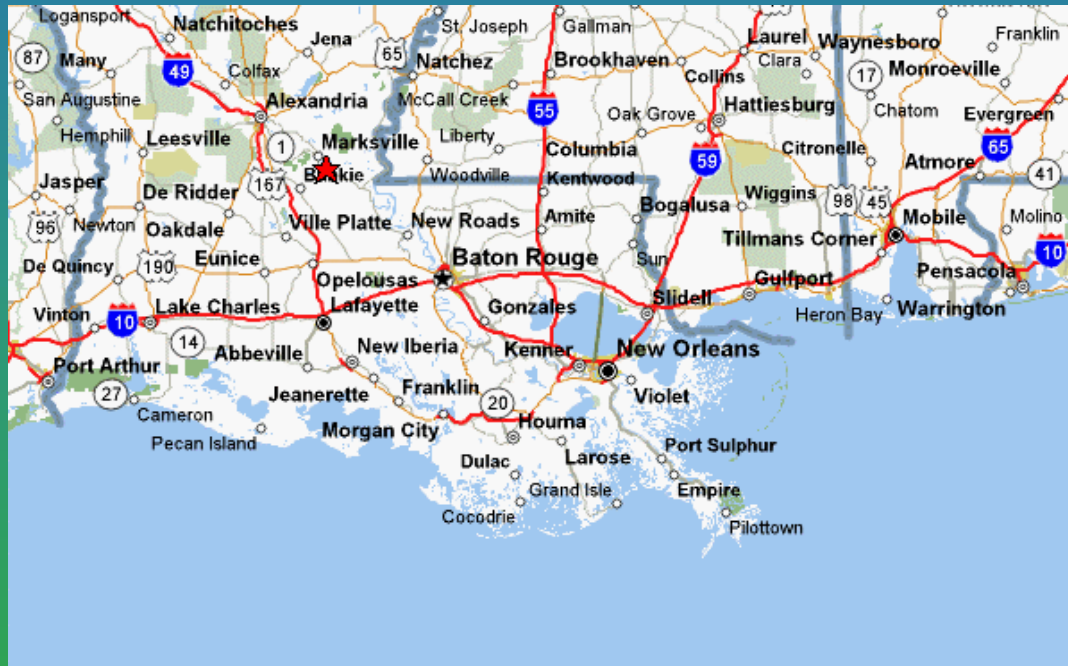
Research Results

- Good start on understanding the role of fishing in Grand Isle
- Everyone stressed the importance of fishing to the community. Community members do consider Grand Isle a fishing community



Venice/Buras/Empire

- Oil is the major industry in Venice



Venice/Buras/Empire

- Shrimp is a major fishery
- Over 80% of shrimp boats owned by Vietnamese
- Menhaden very large fishery in the area
- Tuna
- Oysters from state waters
- Crabs
- Combination of large and small shrimp boats

Challenges for Research

- 2 researchers for six days
- Many of the Vietnamese do not speak English
- Many of the fishermen do not live in the area, but instead live in areas around New Orleans



Challenges for Research

- Many boats were tied up at the docks and shrimpers were not around
- Several of the big shrimp boats have been turned over to the banks
- “Big boats, big notes”



Challenges for Research

- Oil is the major industry
- Fishing also important, but not reflected in the census data since many of the fishermen don't live there
- The three communities run together so not one community profile
- Many of the Vietnamese may not be here legally and unaccounted for

Research Results

- Good start
- Need to interview more recreational fishermen



Research Results

- Much of the landings based on menhaden which is done in state waters
- Oil industry losing jobs in area
- Need to interview more fishermen, both recreational and commercial
- Need to interview more business leaders

Observations

- Identifying fishing communities is going to take longer than ever imagined
- Fishing communities being developed at an ever increasing rate
- Major changes to a community may occur in a short time



Observations

- What may be a fishing community now, may be gone in five years
- In the case of shrimping, imports driving price down and people out of shrimping
- Big boats getting out



Observations

- NMFS reducing effort in shrimping
- This season of hurricanes may force more fishermen out of business due to lost time from fishing and loss of boats and or businesses due to hurricanes



Conclusions

- Do we know more than before this summer?
- Can we identify and describe fishing communities while they still are fishing communities?
- What constitutes a complete community profile?
- Is it better to have a few “complete” profiles, or more “basic” profiles?

Conclusions

- We have a good start in two communities
- Better understanding of these two areas
- Good information to give a personal touch to SIAs
- Need more time and money to do in-depth community profiles

Conclusions

- Fishermen are interested in anthropologists being in the field and having someone from NMFS come and ask them what they think, as if their opinion really mattered









































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